



Why Start a Neighborhood Organization?

First Question: What IS a Neighborhood Organization?

Neighborhood organizations are geographically based. They operate within a well-defined geographical boundary to meet the needs and collective interests of residents within that boundary.

Neighborhood organizations are led and controlled by residents who live within the organization's geographical boundaries.

Neighborhood organizations are operated democratically, as evidenced by a set of bylaws or operating rules, as well as periodic elections for leaders and representatives.

A strong neighborhood group is a valuable tool in maintaining a healthy community. A neighborhood organization brings together people of diverse backgrounds who share common concerns. To meet residents' needs and interests, neighborhood groups work to improve and maintain the quality of life in their neighborhoods through a variety of activities.

Neighborhood organizations include neighborhood watch groups, tenant groups, neighborhood associations, and homeowners' associations (HOA's).

For a list of neighborhood organizations in the City of Knoxville, [see this web page](#) or contact the Office of Neighborhoods at 865-215-3232.

Why Organize a Neighborhood Group?

There are many different reasons why neighborhoods organize. Some of the most common reasons include:

1. Build Community

- Bring neighbors together so they get to know one another.
- Foster communication and interaction among neighbors.
- Make it easier for neighbors to help neighbors in need.
- Enhance a sense of community.
- Boost pride in the neighborhood.
- Encourage citizen involvement in activities and efforts that will help improve the quality of life in the neighborhood.

2. Work together to address threats

- Address blighted and nuisance properties.
- Work with the Police Department to respond to burglaries, car break-ins, drug houses, and other crimes.
- Provide input to proposed rezonings and commercial developments in or near the neighborhood.
- Do something about speeding cars.
- Develop a neighborhood-level disaster preparedness plan.

3. Empower Residents

- Nurture relationships with elected leaders and key governmental department heads.
- Help city staff and elected officials identify and resolve issues and concerns in a particular area.
- Encourage citizen involvement in decisions that impact our lives.
- Speak with a unified voice: strength in numbers.
- Exercise political power and influence.

4. Do More with More (People)

- Utilize everyone's experiences, skills and viewpoints.
- Prevent burn-out through an orderly & periodic change of leadership.
- Address all of the issues, meetings, concerns that impact the neighborhood.
- Leverage the organization to create partnerships with local schools, local government and other community partners.

5. Improve or Preserve Quality of Life

- Promote public safety.
- Advocate for historic preservation.
- Preserve the history of the neighborhood.
- Engage in community improvement projects.
- Enhance community amenities.

6. Give the Neighborhood a Better Name

- Improve image of the neighborhood.
- Increase property values.

7. Benefit Individual Participants

- Meet new friends.
- Learn new skills.